

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND**

ADAM WOOD,

*

Plaintiff,

*

v.

*

Case No. 1:25-cv-01104-EA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

*

Defendant.

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ANSWER

Pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(b), the United States of America (“Defendant”), by its counsel, Kelly O. Hayes, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, and Beatrice C. Thomas, Assistant United States Attorney for that district, hereby answers Adam Wood’s (“Plaintiff”) Supplemental Complaint in this Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552, action. *See* ECF No. 14 (the “Supplemental Complaint”).

Defendant responds to the separately numbered paragraphs (as numbered by Plaintiff) and prayer for relief contained in the Supplemental Complaint below. To the extent that any allegation is not admitted herein, it is denied. Moreover, to the extent that the Supplemental Complaint refers to or quotes from external documents, statutes, or other sources, Defendant may refer to such materials for their accurate and complete contents; however, such references are not intended to be, and should not be construed to be, an admission that the cited materials: (a) are correctly cited or quoted by Plaintiff; (b) are relevant to this, or any other, action; or (c) are admissible in this, or any other, action. Defendant responds to the Supplemental Complaint in like numbered paragraphs as follows:

SUPPLEMENTAL FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

1. Defendant admits that Plaintiff submitted a FOIA Request on March 18, 2025. Defendant avers that the document is the best evidence of its contents and respectfully refers this Court to that request for a complete and accurate statement of its contents.

2. Defendant admits that it acknowledged Plaintiff's FOIA request on March 20, 2025. Defendant avers that the document is the best evidence of its contents and respectfully refers this Court to that request for a complete and accurate statement of its contents.

3. Defendant admits that it has not issued a response to Plaintiff's FOIA request as of the date Plaintiff filed the Complaint. The remainder of the allegations in paragraph 3 constitute legal conclusions to which no response is required.

4. Defendant admits that, as of May 30, 2025, it has not produced records or issued a determination. The remainder of the allegations in paragraph 4 constitute legal conclusions to which no response is required.

5. The allegations in paragraph 5 constitute legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent that a response is required, Defendant denies the allegations.

6. The allegations in paragraph 6 constitute legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent that a response is required, Defendant denies the allegations.

CAUSES OF ACTION – VIOLATION OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

COUNT IX – FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH FOIA

7. Defendant admits that the FBI is an agency subject to FOIA.

8. Defendant admits that Plaintiff submitted a FOIA Request on March 18, 2025. Defendant avers that the document is the best evidence of its contents and respectfully refers this Court to that request for a complete and accurate statement of its contents.

9. Defendant admits that, as of May 30, 2025, it has not produced records or issued a determination. The remainder of the allegations in paragraph 9 constitute legal conclusions to which no response is required.

10. The allegations in paragraph 10 constitute legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent that a response is required, Defendant denies the allegations.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

The remaining paragraphs of the Supplemental Complaint set forth Plaintiff's prayer for relief, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendant denies that Plaintiff is entitled to the relief requested. To the extent the remainder of Plaintiff's Supplemental Complaint is deemed to contain allegations of material fact, they are denied.

DEFENSES

Defendant alleges the following defenses to the Supplemental Complaint. In asserting these defenses, Defendant does not assume the burden to establish any fact or proposition where that burden is properly imposed upon Plaintiff. Defendant reserves the right to amend, alter, and supplement the defenses contained in this Answer as the facts and circumstances giving rise to the Supplemental Complaint become known to it through the course of this litigation.

FIRST DEFENSE

Defendant's actions or inactions did not violate the FOIA or any other statute or regulation.

SECOND DEFENSE

This Court lacks subject matter jurisdiction over any of Plaintiff's requests for relief that exceed the relief authorized by FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

THIRD DEFENSE

The Court lacks jurisdiction over the subject matter of this Complaint because no records have been improperly withheld.

FOURTH DEFENSE

Plaintiff is not entitled to compel production of any records, including portions of records that are not reasonably segregable, that FOIA or any other federal law exempts from disclosure.

FIFTH DEFENSE

Plaintiff is not entitled to production of records protected from disclosure by one or more applicable FOIA exemptions, release of which records foreseeably would harm an interest the exemption protects, or which records are protected from disclosure by one or more applicable FOIA exclusions.

SIXTH DEFENSE

At all times alleged in the Complaint, Defendant acted in good faith, with justification, and pursuant to authority.

SEVENTH DEFENSE

Plaintiff is neither eligible for nor entitled to attorney's costs or fees in this action.

WHEREFORE, Defendant respectfully requests the Court to: (1) dismiss the Supplemental Complaint with prejudice; (2) enter judgment in favor of Defendant; and (3) grant such further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly O. Hayes
United States Attorney

/s/

Beatrice C. Thomas (Bar No. 21969)
Assistant United States Attorney
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Baltimore, Maryland 21201
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Counsel for United States of America

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on the 2nd day of June, 2025, I caused a copy of the foregoing *Answer* to be filed with the Clerk of the Court via the CM/ECF System, and mailed to the Plaintiff at his address of record:

Adam Wood
302 Hibiscus Street
Taneytown, MD 21787

/s/
Beatrice C. Thomas
Assistant United States Attorney